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MAR 1 1961

Kennedy Knows How To Deal With Soviets, Chamber Told

The Kennedy administration knows how to deal with the "deadly threat of communism from the East," a former Russian air force colonel said here last night.

The speaker was Leon Volkov, Soviet affairs editor for Newsweek Magazine. He addressed some 500 persons who attended the 63rd annual dinner of the Asheville Chamber of Commerce in City Auditorium.

The reappointment by President Kennedy of Allen Dulles as head of the Central Intelligence Agency and of J. Edgar Hoover as FBI chief was the first indication that the President intended to serve notice on Soviet Premier Khrushchev that this administration will not bow to Soviet threats and is prepared to fight communism whether inside or outside of the United States, Volkov said.

Volkov asserted that Khrushchev, despite his constant threats and rocket-rattling, is not ready for war.

One reason for this, he said, is that the Soviet agricultural economy is in a very grim state. Khrushchev needs time to think, to devise ways to improve agricultural methods and production so the country could survive a war.

The Soviet premier looks toward Red China and sees it "lean and hungry," Volkov said. And he knows that war could push the Soviet Union into a severe famine, and, subsequently, defeat.

Volkov, who was among the scores of newsmen who toured the U. S. with Khrushchev, said the Soviet premier was greatly impressed with agricultural methods here. On a trip to a 160-acre farm in Iowa, Khrushchev, seeing only one man working in the fields, asked the farmer where his workers were, Volkov said.

The farmer replied he, with the part-time help of his brother, tended the farm. Khrushchev grinned sarcastically and commented that the State De-

partment had probably ordered the farmer to fire all his workers before he arrived, Volkov said.

The speaker said Khrushchev was suspicious because in Russia there are usually some 20 men working a farm of similar size. Volkov went on to say that it takes 65,000,000 Russian farmers to produce 62 per cent of the goods that 8,000,000 American farmers produce.

The reason for Russian agricultural sluggishness, of course, is that the farmer is not enthusiastic, he cannot call his farm his own, Volkov said.

Turning to political feeling in Russia, Volkov said countless

numbers of people are yearning to cast aside the yoke of Communism and be free.

The people who, during World War II, had the opportunity to see the West and know what freedom means are now at the age to be coming into important jobs in the Soviet Union, Volkov said. But he added a political eruption cannot be expected now or in the immediate future because these people are not yet in positions of power.

Volkov, a native of Russia, rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Russian air force and flew numerous missions during World War II. He defected

to the West after the war and has been living in the United States since 1945. He became a U.S. citizen in 1954.

Woodrow S. Burns, retiring chamber president, presided at the dinner meeting. He recounted briefly the work the chamber played during the last year in the progress and development of the Asheville area and introduced a film strip, "We're Mobilized For Action."

During the closing moments of the meeting Burns introduced the 1961 president, George L. Chumbley Jr., and presented him with the president's gavel.